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ABSTRACT

Based on data obtained from a 1985-86 mail survey of 666 current and former residents of New York State identified from Department of Motor Vehicle lists of licensed drivers, the study examines collective and independent contributions of social and economic bonds, residential preferences, and residential satisfaction on migration expectations of immigrants, outmigrants, and non-movers. Findings show 3 of 15 independent variables unrelated to moving expectation: residential satisfaction with opportunities for employment, level of salaries/wages, and recreational/entertainment opportunities. Length of residence in community and home ownership were both negatively related to expectations of moving. The odds that persons renting their homes will expect to move within the next 5 years are 3.8 times greater than for homeowners. Persons not living in their preferred community type are 2.7 times more likely to move than those for whom current and preferred community type agree. Renters preferring to live in a different type of community and dissatisfied with the "quality of life" are 16.3 times more likely to move. Preferences for less urban locations continue to exceed the current population distribution, with more respondents preferring open country locations within 30 miles of a large or medium-sized city than are presently living in one. (NEC)

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SOCIAL STRESS AND THE EXPECTATION OF MOVING
Social and Economic Bonds, Residential Preferences,
and Residential Satisfaction

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**Social Stress and the Expectation of Moving:
Social and Economic Bonds, Residential Preferences,
and Residential Satisfaction**

Problem

The study of migration behavior has dealt with factors that attract or repel individuals and households from a place of residence and to another location of residence. During the 1970's the cognitive behavioral approach to explaining migration behavior developed this original theme by examining migration as a two step process, the decision to leave a current residence followed by a decision of where to relocate. The purpose for organizing an explanation of behavior as a two step cognitive process is to separate out the decisions which are potentially driven by different motivational factors.

The question which this paper addresses is the question of expectation of moving. What factors dealing with social stress--the push-pull effects upon an individual in a current residence--contribute to an explanation of who expects to be moving within the next few years and who expects to remain at their residence and in their current community. We will examine the collective and independent contributions of social and economic bonds, residential preferences, and residential satisfaction to the explanation of expectation to move.

The relevance of the problem is heightened by state and regional policies to promote economic growth--or at least to abate economic decline--which use population growth as a measure of the success they are having in attracting persons to their area. Much of the policies have assumed that there is a one-to-one correspondence between job creation and retention and population growth, at least among the segment of the population of working age. This emphasis upon job development as the key to population growth by attracting the "right kind of people," and retaining residents ignores the importance of non-economic motivations.

Relevant Literature

The cognitive behavioral approach to explaining migration intentions and behavior represents migration decision making as a two step process: first the decision to move from the current residence; and second the decision of where to move. Research on the decision to move from current residence has focused on social and economic bonds, residential preferences, and residential satisfaction.

The greater the social and economic bonds of an individual and household to an area the less likely they are to be planning to move. (Speare et al., 1974; Speare et al., 1982). The bonds which tie an individual or household are not independent of the degree of satisfaction they have with the area. Generally, the greater the bonds to an area the greater the level of satisfaction with the area. Speare concluded that not all of the effect of social and economic bonds is mediated through residential satisfaction. Strong social and economic bonds will reduce the probability that a persons intends to move, even if the person expresses dissatisfaction with the area.

Two of the indicators used to gauge the extent of social and economic bonds have been duration of residence and home-ownership status. The duration of residence reflects degree of assimilation to an area, and therefore the longer the duration of residence the less likely the person is to move (Speare et al. 1974:132). Speare observed that the longer persons have lived in an area the more likely they are to be satisfied with shopping and service facilities. In this case it appears familiarity leads to contentment. Speare and his colleagues (Speare et al. 1982) in their study of inter-state migration from Rhode Island concluded that duration of residence is an indicator that taps a range of unmeasured bonds which build up over time and are not easy to measure directly.

Homeownership represents a rather obvious tie to a current residence and

previous investigators have shown the homeowners are less likely to move than renters. Speare (Speare et al. 1974:132-133) observed that homeownership may follow a conscious decision to settle down and that the sequence in arriving at a decision is better phrased as "movers rent" rather than "renters move." Buying a home represents an immediate economic bond which has a distinctive impact upon mobility. Whereas for renters there is a smooth inverse relation between duration of residence and mobility, homeowners probability of moving is not as affected by duration of residence.

Discrepancy between preferred and current areas of residence tends to increase the likelihood that he or she expects to be moving. Numerous studies have documented with fair consistency that Americans have a strong preference for less urbanized settings. Comparisons between the actual distribution of population with preferred location show that the potential for continued population deconcentration is still great. The population is more concentrated in large and medium sized cities than their preferences for these places.

Heaton (Heaton et al. 1979:570-571) found that persons with a discrepancy between their current and preferred residences were much more likely to be planning a move than those whose current and preferred community type matched. Heaton also found that even when controlling for the level of residential satisfaction that residential preferences still showed a strong association with the expectation of moving.

Satisfaction with an area is also related to the expectation of moving. Dissatisfaction appears to be a necessary pre-condition for considering a move, although dissatisfaction alone is not a sufficient condition to cause a person to plan on moving (Speare et al. 1982:553).

Community satisfaction has generally been measured with respect to specific community and regional attributes, or as a non-specific global assessment of the area. Global measures tend to tap more than just the sum of the

individual attributes that are thought to comprise community satisfaction. Sofranko and Fliegel (1984) found that most of the variation in global satisfaction is unexplained by reference to specific items of satisfaction. Among the specific components of residential satisfaction, Sofranko and Fliegel found that the level of satisfaction with one's neighbors, area shopping facilities, and quality of schools were good predictors of the intention to move.

Speare and his colleagues found that job satisfaction had a weak negative association with the expectation of moving (Speare et al 1982). This result was surprising and they recommended that a better measure than satisfaction with a particular job would be satisfaction with employment opportunities in the area. An individual who is otherwise satisfied with the opportunities for employment in his or her geographic area can cope with dissatisfaction with a particular job by switching jobs, but dissatisfaction with employment opportunities means that moving is the principal strategy for improving one's employment.

Hypotheses

Based on the previous research of Heaton (Heaton et al. 1979); Sofranko and Fliegel (1984); and Speare (Speare et al. 1974; Speare et al. 1982) we propose the follow hypotheses for explaining whether an individual expects to move.

A. Social and Economic Bonds. The greater the social and economic bonds to an area the less likely that a person will expect to move.

1. The longer the duration of residence the lower the odds of expecting to move.

2. Homeowners have lower odds of expecting to move than renters.

B. Residential Preferences. Persons whose preferred residence differs from their current residence are more likely to expect to move.

1. Discrepancy between current and preferred region of residence increases

the odds of expecting move.

2. Discrepancy between current and preferred state of residence increases the odds of expecting to move.
3. Discrepancy between current and preferred community type increases the odds of expecting to move.

C. **Residential Satisfaction.** Persons who are more dissatisfied with their community are more likely to expect to move.

1. High satisfaction with public education means lower odds of expecting to move.
2. High satisfaction with opportunities for employment means lower odds of expecting to move.
3. High satisfaction with level of salary and wages means lower odds of expecting to move.
4. High satisfaction with recreational and entertainment opportunities means lower odds of expecting to move.
5. High satisfaction with area as a place to raise children means lower odds of expecting to move.
6. High satisfaction with nearness to family and relatives means lower odds of expecting to move.
7. High satisfaction with cost of housing means lower odds of expecting to move.
8. High satisfaction with availability of housing means lower odds of expecting to move.
9. High satisfaction with overall "quality of life" means lower odds of expecting to move.
10. High satisfaction with overall "cost of living" means lower odds of expecting to move.

Procedure

Data

The findings reported here are based on data obtained from a 1985-86 mail survey of current and former residents of New York State. Current residents included recent immigrants and persons who had resided in the state a minimum of 5 years. Former residents included persons who had migrated from New York to another state within the past 5 years.

The sampling frame was taken from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles file of licensed drivers. Three lists were used: for immigrants we used the list of voluntary surrenders--persons who moved to New York State and surrendered their out-of-state licenses; for outmigrants the list of reciprocities--persons who moved to another state and surrendered their license to that state, which in turn returned the license to New York State; and for non-movers the list of renewals--persons who have resided in New York State for at least four years (the term of a license) and have renewed their drivers license. In order to concentrate upon persons of prime working age, the sample frame was further defined as persons between the ages of 25 and 54. The total persons in the files meeting these criteria were 73,786 for persons moved to New York, 48,357 for persons moved from New York, and 955,969 for persons licensed over 4 years.

The purpose of the study is to compare characteristics of immigrants, outmigrants, and non-movers. The list of motorists surrendering their drivers licenses is not a complete listing of all interstate movers. Missing are people who did not hold drivers licenses prior to their move, people who do not voluntarily surrender their out-of-states licenses, and people who move to states which do not have a reciprocal agreement with New York State. However, drivers license registration lists have been judged to be excellent sampling frames with a slight bias of under representation of the elderly (Warner et

al., 1977). The elderly are not part of the target population in this study, and therefore this particular bias should have no effect. However the number of immigrants and outmigrants reported in the DMV files are not good direct or relative measures of gross migration flows due to apparently greater under reporting of outmigrants than immigrants.

The sample list was drawn initially as a systematic sample of approximately 1,000 individuals from each sub-file. Finally the sample size was reduced to 500 from each sub-file by drawing a simple random sample from the larger initial sample.

Variables and Measures

In order to measure expectation of migration, respondents were asked whether they expected to move from their present community within the next five years. The possible answers were a simple no or yes, yielding a dichotomous dependent variable.

The independent or explanatory variables used to indicate social and economic bonds were duration of residence and homeownership status. Duration of residence was determined by asking respondents how many years they had lived in their present community. The number of years was coded into a five-point scale with the following categories: less than or equal to one year; two years; three to five years; six to 15 years; and more than 15 years. In order to determine homeownership, respondents were asked whether they own or rent (buying) their home.

The second group of independent variables dealt with correspondence between current and preferred location of residence. Respondents were classified by region of country, state, and community size/location. In order to determine current location, respondents were asked in what state was their usual place of residence. Based on their reply they were coded by state and one of the nine Census Bureau geographic divisions. The degree of urban and metropolitan

character of their community were ascertained by asking the respondents to select a description which best characterized their current community. The categories given in the questionnaire were:

1. In a large metropolitan city (over 500,000 population).
2. In a medium-sized city (50,000 to 500,000 population).
3. In a smaller city or village (under 50,000 population) but within 30 miles of a large or medium-sized city.
4. In the country, outside of any city or village, but within 30 miles of a large or medium-sized city.
5. In a smaller city or village (under 50,000 population) more than 30 miles from a large or medium-sized city.
6. In the country, outside of any city or village, more than 30 miles from a large or medium-sized city.

Respondents were asked to identify the census division in which they would most like to live. Similarly, respondents were asked to identify the state they would most like to live in. For community size/location preference, respondents were asked what kind of community they would prefer to live in if they had their choice, using the same categories previously described.

We compared current and preferred locations coding respondents for whom they matched into one category, and those with a discrepancy into another category.

The third and final group of independent variables concern the respondent's level of residential satisfaction with their current community. We measured residential satisfaction in terms of specific attributes and semi-global perceptions. The specific attributes were: quality of public education, opportunities for employment, level of salary and wages, recreational and entertainment opportunities, as a place to raise children, nearness to family and relatives, cost of housing, and availability of housing. The semi-global perceptions asked their satisfaction with the overall "quality of life," and overall "cost of living." Satisfaction was measured on a four-point scale ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

Data Collection Procedures

The mail survey was conducted by staff of the Survey Research Facility of the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research at Cornell University from November 1985 through March 1986. Questionnaires were mailed first-class with individually addressed and hand signed cover letters to the New York State address given by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Address corrections were requested from the Post Office. For the persons we knew had moved out of New York State, we were mailing to a former address with the hope that the questionnaire would be sent on where a forwarding order was in effect. First class mail is forwarded for 18 months and all the addresses we had should have been current within the preceding 12 months. The biggest problem obviously was locating outmigrants.

The final response rates were:

Inmigrants	58%
Outmigrants	39%
Non-movers	54%.

The response rates were calculated by counting responses as completed questionnaires which were returned by respondents. The denominator was eligible participants, calculated as the original sample minus those who sent us a refusal or for whom the questionnaire was returned by the Post Office because they were unable to deliver it due to incorrect address or no forwarding address. The greatest reduction due to the Post Office being unable to deliver was for the Outmigrants where 34% of the original sample was returned as unable to deliver. Comparable proportion for the Inmigrants was 6% and 2% for the Non-movers. The total number of completed questionnaires was 666.

Results

The three sub-populations were drawn with different probabilities of inclusion and therefore the combined group do not represent a self-weighted

sample. The results of this analysis with the combined sub-populations can not be used to generalize what proportion of current and former New Yorkers own homes, prefer large cities, are satisfied with the overall quality of life where they now live, or are expecting to move within five years. The analysis is intended rather to examine what relationship exists between the expectation of moving--given a mixture of immigrants, outmigrants, and non-movers--and individual characteristics and attitudes.

The 15 independent variables were individually cross-tabulated with the dependent variable, expectation of moving within five years. Table 1 is a summary of the bivariate relationships expressed in terms of significance and strength of relationship. Three of the 15 independent variables were unrelated to the expectation of moving: residential satisfaction with opportunities for employment; with the level of salaries and wages; and with recreational and entertainment opportunities.

The analysis supports the hypothesized relationships for social and economic bonds. Length of residence in community and owning a home are both moderately related in negative direction with the expectation of moving. The hypotheses regarding residential preferences are also supported. Discrepancy between current and preferred location has a significant and positive relation to the expectation of moving for regional, state, and community preferences.

With the exception of the three previously mentioned variables dealing with residential satisfaction, the seven remaining residential satisfaction variables had significant and positive relations to the expectation of moving as hypothesized. The strongest relationship, a moderate 0.314 Pearson's product moment correlation, was for satisfaction with the overall "quality of life." The other semi-global measure of residential satisfaction, satisfaction with the overall "cost of living," had the weakest relation.

We chose three independent variables with the strongest relation to the expectation of moving and each representing one of the conceptual groupings in

order to further analyze their individual and collective contributions to explaining variation in the expectation of moving. The three variables and their corresponding conceptual group were:

Variable	Conceptual Group
Homeownership status	Social and economic bonds
Community preference	Residential preference
Overall "quality of life"	Residential satisfaction

The method of analysis is a preliminary version of log linear analysis. The strength of relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable is expressed as an odds ratio. Table 2 presents the odds of expecting to move for persons who own their homes versus those who rent. The odds that a person who rents their home will expect to move within the next five years is 3.8 times greater than for homeowners. The object then is to develop a model which significantly improves the odds of predicting who expects to move.

Persons for whom their current type of community does not correspond with their preferred type have 2.7 times the odds of moving compared with those whom current and preferred community type agree (See Table 3). The final independent variable, satisfaction with the overall "quality of life" has an odds ratio of 6.6 for the extremes where the odds of a highly satisfied person expecting to move are 0.40 and for a dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied person the odds are 2.64 (See Table 4).

In order to evaluate the combined effect of all three independent variables upon explaining the expectation of moving, we constructed a four-fold table, Table 5. Comparing the extreme cases derived from the hypothesized relationships--that is persons who own their home, are living in the type of community they prefer, and are highly satisfied with the overall "quality of life" with persons who are renting their home, prefer to live in different type of community, and are dissatisfied with the overall "quality of life"--

the odds ratio increases to 16.3. Within the table, generally the odds change in the predicted manner. In sum, we conclude that the ability to explain variation in the expectation of moving is improved by employing all three independent variables and that each makes an independent contribution in addition to their shared contribution.

Discussion

This paper examines factors dealing with social stress--the push-pull effects upon an individual in a current residence--which contribute to an explanation of who expects to be moving within the next few years and who expects to remain at their residence and in their current community. We have examined the collective and independent contributions of social and economic bonds, residential preferences, and residential satisfaction to the explanation of expectation to move; and conclude that knowledge of these characteristics improves the odds of correctly predicting who expects to move.

One of the most interesting findings is that satisfaction with employment opportunities and the level of salaries and wages is not related to the expectation of moving. This conclusion is consistent with Speare's findings regarding job satisfaction and inter-state migration for Rhode Island (Speare et al. 1982). Speare was concerned that questions dealing with personal job satisfaction might not adequately tap social stress tied to migration because if a person were satisfied with job opportunities in general they could adapt by switching jobs within the same labor market area. We questioned our respondents regarding their satisfaction with the labor market--availability of jobs and pay levels--and still found no relation to plans for moving.

Post-hoc reasons given for why a person actually moved generally give employment related reasons, yet the expectation of moving--which is strongly related to subsequent migration--is not related to employment. Our findings

support the cognitive behavioral approach in that the decision to leave and the decision of where to relocate are conceptually and empirically separate steps to understanding migration behavior.

Further, preferences for less urban locations continue to exceed the current distribution of population. The greatest discrepancy exists for open country locations within 30 miles of a large or medium-sized city. A much larger proportion of our respondents prefer this type of community than are presently living in one.

One of our respondents commented about residential preferences that:

The bottom line on finding a place to live is, for us, locating a fulfilling, long-time employment opportunity. Once this is done, we would prefer to live in as rural an area, as close to the job as possible (our jobs are most likely going to be found in urban area).

If this attitude is shared by the fairly large proportion of persons who prefer less urban communities, then it appears that we will continue to experience growth on the rural-urban fringe as persons who are currently renting their home, prefer less urban communities, and are not satisfied with the overall "quality of life" where they are living make plans to leave the more urban communities where they now live.

**TABLE 1: Bivariate Relationships Of Expectation to Move
With Social and Economic Bonds, Residential Preference, and
Residential Satisfaction**

Variable	Significant (Probability < .01)	Product Moment Correlation	Lambda Asymmetric
Social and Economic Bonds			
Duration of residence	YES	-0.312	0.233
Homeownership	YES*	-0.315	0.281
Residential Preference			
Regional preference	YES	0.169	0.099
State preference	YES	0.238	0.145
Community preference	YES*	0.243	0.192
Residential satisfaction			
Quality of public educat	YES	0.129	0.070
Opportunity for employment	NO		
Level of salary and wages	NO		
Recreation/entertainment	NO		
Place to raise children	YES	0.284	0.184
Near to family/relatives	YES	0.231	0.151
Cost of housing	YES	0.212	0.165
Availability of housing	YES	0.192	0.140
Overall "quality of life"	YES*	0.314	0.194
Overall "cost of living"	YES	0.134	0.079

TABLE 2: Odds of Expecting to Move by Social and Economic Bonds.

Homeownership	Expecting To Move		Odds of Expecting To Move
	No	Yes	
Own	182	93	0.51
Rent	135	259	1.92
Odds Ratio (Rent/Own) (1.92/0.51)			3.8

TABLE 3: Odds of Expecting to Move by Residential Preference Status.

Preference Status	Expecting To Move		Odds of Expecting To Move
	No	Yes	
Correspondence	197	101	0.51
Discrepancy	152	212	1.39
Odds Ratio (Discrepancy/Correspond)			2.7
(1.39/0.51)			

TABLE 4: Odds of Expecting to Move by Residential Satisfaction.

Satisfaction	Expecting To Move		Odds of Expecting To Move
	No	Yes	
Highly Satisfied	161	64	0.40
Satisfied	157	164	1.04
Dissatisfied	33	87	2.64
Odds Ratio (Dissatisfied/Highly Satisfied)			6.6
(2.64/0.40)			

TABLE 5: Odds of Expecting to Move by Social and Economic Bonds,
Preference Status, and Residential Satisfaction

Homeownership	Discrepancy Between Current and Preferred Location	Satisfaction With Overall Quality of Life	Expecting To Move		Odds of Expecting To Move
			No	Yes	
Own	No	High Satisfied	85	11	0.129
Own	No	Satisfied	53	31	0.585
Own	No	Dissatisfied	3	9	3.000
Own	Yes	High Satisfied	46	22	0.478
Own	Yes	Satisfied	53	39	0.736
Own	Yes	Dissatisfied	11	21	1.909
Rent	No	High Satisfied	22	11	0.500
Rent	No	Satisfied	24	31	1.292
Rent	No	Dissatisfied	6	9	1.500
Rent	Yes	High Satisfied	5	22	4.400
Rent	Yes	Satisfied	24	39	1.625
Rent	Yes	Dissatisfied	10	21	2.100

Odds Ratio

16.3

(Rent-Yes-Dissatisfied)/(Own-No-High Satisfied)
(2.100/0.129)